Street Maintenance

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Regardless of original street construction quality—maintenance becomes the City’s responsibility.

The Public Works Department of the City of Lexington operates under the direction of the City Engineer, Mr. Dan B. Bryan, who has the dual title of “City Engineer” and “Director of Public Works.” The Department of Public Works is divided into several different fields of operation, including street maintenance. The department, including the City Engineer’s office, has approximately two hundred and twenty-five (225) Civil Service employees. The operating budget for the year of 1963 amounted to about One Million Three Hundred Thousand ($1,300,000.00) Dollars. The street maintenance division spent Two Hundred Eighty-nine Thousand One Hundred Thirty-four Dollars and Twenty-seven Cents ($289,134.27) during the year of 1963, which is approximately twenty-two (22%) percent of the total budget for the department. There are fifty-two (52) Civil Service employees assigned to street maintenance.

In 1963 the City resurfaced Seventy-nine thousand (79,000) square yards of streets. This work was done by contract on a competitive bid basis for materials in place, at a total cost of Sixty-one Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty-four Dollars and Thirty-three Cents ($61,754.33).

To determine square yard cost, I have divided the work into two sections, one of which includes those streets where an attempt was made to cover the surface with 1 1/4 inch of Class I-Type B., asphaltic concrete surface material where only a small amount of the same material was needed for leveling course. This portion contains Seventy-five Thousand (75,000) square yards at a unit price cost of $ 0.635 per square yard. The remainder of the work was done on the Jefferson-Manchester Street viaducts where it was necessary to remove and replace 3,650 square yards of asphalt materials, some of which were six inches in thickness, at a cost of more than $ 3.65 per square yard. This portion is so unique that I can find nothing with which to compare it.

No seal coating was done in 1963. I wish to bring the subject before you during discussion which will follow.

Street cleaning is a very important part of our street maintenance program, the routine of which can be worked out so as to follow a rather uniform day-to-day pattern. It can be compared to housekeeping. It can be good, bad or indifferent.

The City has three street sweepers, two of which are operated through two eight hour shifts. One sweeper is kept in readiness for use when either of the others are being serviced and/or repaired. Two sweepers start at midnight and work until eight in the morning when the other operators take over and work until four in the afternoon. The downtown business section is swept daily, seven days per week. Elsewhere, throughout the City operating schedules have been worked out on the basis of services required. The white wing crew, consisting of nine men, service the downtown business section daily seven days per week. Work days are staggered so that each man works six days per week.
Permits are required for all utility cuts when excavation is necessary within the limits of public streets or upon public property. No individual, firm or corporation is allowed to replace the street paving, curb or sidewalk where utility cuts are made for the purpose of installation or repair of service connections, or, underground utilities. When such underground work is completed, the City's street maintenance crews restore the streets, curbs and sidewalks and bill the parties to whom permits were issued for restoration of the pavement. The four public service companies operating within the City are billed monthly for restoration of pavement charged to them. Statements are sent to all others when the street restoration has been completed. Uniform charges are made on a unit price basis for restoration of high type paving, secondary type paving and for sidewalks.

Certain exceptions are made in regard to these regulations. When new construction of water mains, gas mains, telephone conduits and associated work is performed by general contractors for the public service companies, or, where sewers are constructed for the City by general contractors, said contractors restore street paving, curbs and sidewalks in accordance with detailed specifications provided by the City.

Except for curbs and sidewalks, falling within the street right-of-way at street intersections, property owners are required to maintain the sidewalks abutting their property. Much of this work is done on a voluntary basis. However, many notices are sent to property owners, requiring them to make repairs. The Inspector usually identifies the portions to be replaced. Permits are required and sidewalk repairs must be made according to City standard specifications by general contractors, or, by individuals, licensed to perform such work. Inspections are made by the City.

This brief informal paper certainly does not cover the subject and was not intended to do so. Several important items such as street lighting, traffic control, snow removal and other items have not been mentioned. I hope we will have time to discuss them.

Because of the great expansion and the extremely irregular City limits lines, the City of Lexington is confronted with many problems, not only in street maintenance, but, in ALL branches of the Public Works Department. I am confident that other departments are affected in like manner.

Except for the foresight, bold thinking and determined efforts of the City Fathers, City Manager and others devoted to the welfare of the City, Lexington would have "withered on the vine."

As it stands today Lexington is the only incorporated City in Fayette County. The City's trunk line sanitary sewers extend through large areas beyond the City's corporate limits. City services will be made available to all such areas when they are annexed.

From ten to fifteen miles of streets will be added to our street maintenance program for each square mile annexed to the City. We welcome criticism of our efforts and suggestions for improving our efficiency.